

Main Challenges of the Maritime Education in Novia University of Applied Sciences

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to develop the maritime education in Novia University of Applied Sciences to meet the students' needs better. The solutions for developing the education were established by tracking down the main challenges and problems and finding out ways to overcome them.

To find out the ideas and challenges, the students were interviewed by using a questionnaire with peer to peer method. The teachers were also interviewed to confirm some facts and to get a better understanding of the systems and possibilities.

A couple of major challenges were found. The ones that can be overcome easily, were mostly about information and courses, and a couple of suggestions were made. The solutions were presented to some teachers to see if they were realistic and to find out if there were any problems with the ideas. The suggestions will be presented to all the teachers and school personnel later and hopefully implemented by Aboa Mare for the benefit of Novia maritime education.

Language: English

Key words: Studies, Education, Challenges, Solutions

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1 Introduction and Research Problem

Every student, every teacher and every line of education have their challenges. It was brought up to ENÅ (Elevföreningen vid Navigationsskolan i Åbo) by ENÅ members that as a student association, ENÅ could bring some of these problems up for the students benefit.

The students in Novia Auriga-campus face same kind of problems every year, and there is a lot of frustration around certain subjects, but there was nothing on paper. The students wishes and comments on education in general are asked in some cases, but it is not exactly known where the results go, who is dealing with them, and how or if are the students comments understood at all. Therefore, a questionnaire from a student, to students, for students best, was needed. This questionnaire concentrates on certain matters to best bring up the wishes and ideas for the education, as well as digging into the roots of the problems.

1.1 Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to find ways of developing the maritime education of Novia University of Applied Sciences to meet the students' needs better. The suggestions presented in this study are hopefully implemented by Aboa Mare. The aim is to find some simple and practical solutions which would be beneficial for both teachers and students in the long run. The suggestions for solutions are made to be detailed for the easy implementation.

1.2 Limitation

This study observed the maritime education in Novia University of Applied Sciences' Auriga campus, which is provided by Aboa Mare, from students' point of view. The education for sea captain in Novia University of Applied Sciences is separated on another campus in Turku with different teachers and systems. It is quite a small section and the students from there are easily forgotten/ignored by Novia. Also the student organization differs and it is important that it backs the students up and sees that students good is brought up.

The questionnaire was aimed for students of Aboa Mare who are currently studying maritime management (bachelor's degree) on both English and Swedish speaking programs with using peer to peer method. The questionnaire was dealt on paper form from a student to students

for a reason; to have the best possible answers to form a comprehensive picture about the current situation in Aboa Mare.

The suggestions for solutions are formed for the students best, without taking up the economic aspect too much. The solutions are made to be simple also because simple solutions do not usually require too much financing. All in all, the total resources needed are not calculated and therefore they are not considered at this study.

2 Reasoning

This study is done from students' perspective and has students' good as a priority. But what makes students satisfied and why is it important for all parties? What have the educational institutes and the society to gain by putting students good first?

2.1 Student Satisfaction

There are various reasons to make a student satisfied and the things highlighted vary between different sources. QUILT (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching) divides the reasons to "teaching quality", "learner engagement", "learning resources", "student support" and "skills development".¹

Subjects most relevant to this study are the quality of teaching, learning resources and student support. The good teaching quality means that a student receives teaching which he/she experiences relevant, challenging enough and well-structured with clear explanations on assessments and coursework. From teachers this requires being helpful, approachable and that they demonstrate concern for students' learning. Apart from school's spaces, the learning resources are about learning materials and equipment together with IT resources. Student support then again includes administrative staff/systems and an institute's support for a student.¹

Learner engagement and skills development are not discussed too much in this study. Learner engagement is about students feeling prepared for their studies or belonging to their institute and if they have interacted with other students or not and skills development is about how a student's individual building-up-knowledge is going.

¹ (QUILT Student Experience, 2019)

2.2 Higher Education in Finnish Society Today and Tomorrow

It is of society's interest that the youngsters start the university and graduate from there as soon as possible. The universities are paid by the government the current norms and objects of value highlighted.

It is not enough for the education to keep up with the fast-changing industry, but it has to develop to suit the society's objectives as well. The government seems to push the universities of applied sciences towards more "effective" operation. In the near future even more value is going to be put on graduating students and e.g. co-operation between universities and developing more flexible studies.²

It has to be remembered that maritime education is quite a special case, but it doesn't change the fact that Aboa Mare too needs motivated and satisfied students who graduate on time. This takes us back to why it is important for educational institutes that students receive education which they can see the progress of, are able to affect themselves and find meaningful.

3 Other Similar Studies

This kind of study has not been made about maritime education in Novia University of Applied Sciences before. However, some studies about subjects which have been touched upon on this thesis and similar studies of other universities have been made.

The study closest to this one is Johan Oksanen's thesis Deck Officer Viewpoint on the Education.³ It mainly evaluates the education's correspondence with the officer's work which is covered in several parts of this thesis as well. Some of the ideas and findings should in fact have been implemented years ago and reconsidered now again.

Rasmus Nygren wrote his thesis about working while studying which gives a bit different perspective to the sections in this thesis which have to do with combining the curriculum with on board training and work. There were not as many answers to his questionnaire, but it was more specific.⁴ Another, more specific thesis regarding one of the programs used for

² (Opetus- ja Kulttuuriministeriö, 2019)

³ (Oksanen, 2019)

⁴ (Nygren, 2019)

teaching (Videotel) has also been written earlier by Esa Kallio. It has useful extra information about the “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats” of Videotel.⁵

A very similar thesis to this one was made about developing the university degree in Metropolia using a student satisfactory survey as basis. The aim of the thesis was to develop the education using the student survey as a basis. The thesis had more background information and the answers for the questionnaire could only be put on a scale from agree to disagree whereas on the questionnaire for this thesis the questions were formed to find out more specific information and to give the possibility to comment the subjects freely. The results were also varying: for example, the information flow was considered good in Metropolia business administration and one of the main challenges in the maritime education in YH Novia. In both cases there has been some problems with teachers answering the mails though.⁶ These two educations are very different, and the theses are concentrating on a bit different matters although the headings and aims are very similar.

4 Methods

The main challenges and therefore the results are based on the students answers on a questionnaire which was dealt by using peer to peer method. Teachers and personnel of YH Novia on Auriga campus are used as resources and some of the information is based on interviews with them.

4.1 Interviews with Teachers and Personnel

To be able to understand the big picture and other points of view, several interviews with many teachers even from other schools and school personnel were needed. Some teachers were consulted before the questionnaire was given out, when analysing the results, when summing things up for the challenges and finally before presenting the solutions. Teachers have been interviewed mainly during November and December of 2019, most for keeping to the facts under challenges and for getting a good understanding of teachers’ procedures etc to get the best realistic solutions for all. Their opinions about the suggestions for solutions were also asked and the ideas some of them brought up are considered and discussed under

⁵ (Kallio, 2019)

⁶ (Koski & Lindfors, 2019)

solutions. In the end it is also beneficial for students if teachers' job isn't too complicated and difficult.

4.2 A Questionnaire for Students

A peer to peer questionnaire dealt in person is a good tool to get the people it is aimed for to answer easily and freely. It makes the person in question comfortable in the situation and the possibility to affect the results feel more real. This has an effect to response rate and the quality of answers. The questions were formed in a way that allows the students to bring up their own ideas, opinions and explanations.

5 Background for the Questionnaire

There is always something to improve specially with education. The maritime education should not only focus on today's needs inside the maritime field but also prepare for the future. This forms a major challenge but also a possibility. With this the student's opinion should maybe be appreciated a bit more since the younger generation has grown up in a hectic era and maybe have a bit clearer vision of the future. They might not know all the details about the work on board of which the more experienced seafarers and teachers of course have better knowledge, but they might have ideas that the older ones can't see clearly. They also might know surprisingly well which parts of education should be renewed with having been more on board lately (in some cases at least) in comparison with the teachers who have been working on land (again, there are exemptions). The teachers of course get timely information from ship owners, professional seafarers, Traficom, internet etc and link it to their previous information from the time they were sailing the seas. The ship owners, and maybe the other sources of information as well, might have their own motives when giving out the information and teachers build the new information gathered on the old ground which makes their points of view different from that of students. I'm not stating one or other being better but them to be different and thus listening to both might result in something good. All this led to the first questions on the questionnaire about parts of studies that need renewing and ideas for new courses.

The students who are even relatively good in maths get asked all the time if they could help fellow students. There are a lot of students who are struggling with this subject and retake many of the courses. This makes one wonder about which of the courses are the problematic ones for the students and how big exactly is the need for extra lessons.

There has been some changes in the net services during the past 5 years. Have the changes been for the better? And what do students think of the platforms in general? Which of the platforms are found useful and which a waste of time regarding the computer-based courses? When a teacher is planning a course there are quite many options regarding how and where the courses are done. A question was asked to know about how the students see the different options and hopefully to affect the teachers decision on choosing the method/platform.

It is a widely known fact among students that, in some cases, it is very hard to get in contact with certain teachers or get the credits from certain courses. The information about these subjects spread as rumours of which some are more accurate than others. When a student finds about one or two cases of same teacher or same course, it might be pure coincidence or part of a bigger problem. The wider outlining of these problems is necessary in order to distinguish the facts from coincidences and rumours, thus the questions about credits and contacting the teachers.

Many of the teachers and students, myself included, know English, Swedish and Finnish. All of the three languages are being mixed and can be heard everywhere at Aboa Mare every day. There are also several students and clients from all over the world e.g. Russia and South Korea who add their languages to the three main ones. This mixing pot of languages brings also problems with it: any part of information which is not in English is not understood by all. However, most of the teachers and personnel of Aboa Mare understand both English and Swedish and a small part of information which is in Swedish might go unnoticed if no one points it out. Students also help each other with spreading information so these problems of non-Swedish (or in some cases non-Finnish) speaking students don't always come up unless asked directly. Therefore, it is important to find out where the problem actually is.

The education of a sea captain includes a lot of on board training. It is quite hard for students sometimes to combine the obligatory-presence-courses with on board training. In order to make it easier, it was asked in the questionnaire whether it is easy to combine those or not, hoping to find some solutions on what the problem is and how to make it easier to combine on board time with the curriculum.

6 Results and Analysis

As noted earlier, to reach as many students as possible and get their opinions on different matters there is no other good option but to make a questionnaire. Some of the questions are

formed to find some new ideas and some are based on corridor talk; to find the problems students have encountered and to understand the magnitude of them. A table of the results for each question in the questionnaire has been made and can be found from appendix 1.

The questionnaire was given in paper form during several days to students currently studying in Novia University of Applied Sciences, campus of Auriga (part of Aboa Mare). This is partly because my own experience is that people answer easier when someone you know gives you the questionnaire personally and partly to be able to control to who the questionnaire is given. 86 questionnaires in total were filled which of 27 by first year students, 12 by second year students, 15 by third year students, 9 by fourth year students, 16 by fifth year students or older and 7 by those without a starting year or those who have studied in Axxell before and can't be put to the same scale. The answers are put on tables which can be found in the end, from appendix 1 and the relations between the different starting times from figure 1. There is one table for answers of each of the questions containing all the detailed information.

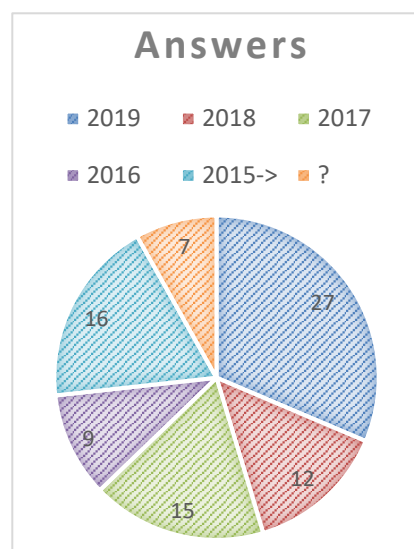


Figure 1. Students' answers to the questionnaire divided by their starting year (Appendix 1).

6.1 Parts of Studies that Need Renewing

Regarding to students there isn't only certain parts of education which should be renewed but rather the content of courses and the form (online, examination etc) of them: 11 of the comments under this question were related to that. Everything in this world is starting to be digitalized and on internet which can be seen from students wishes. The development inside the maritime field is going forward fast and the course material should follow and be updated regularly to meet the expectations and needs of the future seafarers. Students also want to see all the material available on Itslearning to be able to go through it later. The wish for material standards, apart from renewing of course material on internet, likely refers to Videotel being "outdated" which is discussed later.

Under several titles of the table under this question it can be seen that students want more hands-on teaching. The students want to receive knowledge which could be directly linked to real-life work on board. In the table 1.1 in Appendix 1 there are comments about it under

the subtitle's Courses and Material in General, Cargo Handling/Stability, English, Environmental Protection, Machinery and Simulator courses. Simulator courses are wished to be more individual to make the most of the time in them which is also wished to be more.

As specific subjects, mathematics and physics were taken up most: there were 9 mentions about them. The main focus on renewing these courses should be put on the teaching method. There were a lot of comments of homework under this question. Students want to have homework in these subjects and want them to be gone through in class in order to learn better. They are also seen as difficult subjects and students want more time for these which comes up better later on.

Under Cargo Handling/Stability the teaching methods are also questioned but that's not the only part of these courses which need renewing according to students which of 7 commented these courses. It sounds like the courses should be rethought. Regarding the material it is wished to be updated and not based on calculations but should concentrate more on the loading procedures in real life. According to students these courses should also contain more information about loading and stability software's such as NAPA which are widely used on different kinds of cargo ships.

The education of a sea captain contains 5 different English courses: professional English 1-3 and ML English 1-2⁷. It is clearly considered as too many since all who mentioned the English courses under this question (4 students) commented on that. The two ML English courses are considered as extra and the content of all courses is wished to focus more on seafaring and the vocabulary needed on board. As a very international branch this would help the students a lot at work later.

6.2 Suggestions for New Courses

Polar code (11 comments), FRB (fast rescue boats, 5 comments) and DP (dynamic positioning, 4 comments) are courses what the school already offers to students. They are "elective studies" which are also referred elsewhere in this analysis. Only a small amount of people who are fast enough to sign up are taken to the courses. FRB has been in the course catalogue as long as I have been in this school (4 years), but Polar code and DP courses have been available for some students only a couple of years now. This situation seems to be changing for better since the students now receive e-mails about available places on courses

⁷ (NOVIA Study guide, 2019)

more often. There still isn't any of these courses available for students only which would increase the number of students taken to courses. Regarding the Polar Code course; the students should have the freedom to specialize on either ice navigation or Ecologically and Economically Sustainable development in seafaring as is stated in the description of the studies on Novias web page.⁸ However, this is not included in the studies for all students.

We only have the obligatory language courses on Auriga campus. However, students of Novia have the right to choose certain courses from other universities and universities of applied sciences.⁹ These courses include a variety of language courses¹⁰. This also widens the variety of eligible courses in general and we need 5 study points worth of courses outside of our curriculum's obligatory courses¹¹.

The AB course would give better employment possibilities to students. It is also a very practical course before the work as an officer (the comments for the practical courses were 2 and for AB course 1). In preparing the student for the work of an officer the "Paperwork" course would be really good (2 comments). A great part of the officer/captain work is paperwork which is not taught at school. It is assumed that if you don't learn this in your on board training, you learn it at your first job as an officer. This includes everything regarding certificates, safety equipment test recording etc.

6.3 Courses Students Wish Extra Lessons with

The watchkeeping officer/captain is responsible of the safe manoeuvring of the ship. Therefore, the simulator courses are highly valued among the students being very practical and corresponding to the reality. 17 of the students who answered the questionnaire wish to have more simulator hours, especially for manoeuvring. In the simulator courses more introduction to different bridge systems is also wished with more individual training with only up to 2 persons.

As came up earlier, regarding mathematics the students find it difficult to learn the topic in the given time, which varies between 1 and 2 weeks. 15 students wanted to have extra lessons in this subject to be able to pass the exam. As it came up under renewal of courses the

⁸ (NOVIA official web page, 2019)

⁹ (NOVIA Flexible Study Right, 2019)

¹⁰ (Åbo Akademi Studiehandbok, 2019)

¹¹ (NOVIA Curriculum Maritime Management, 2019)

homework was also commented here. It would in a way give extra time for the course and therefore solve part of the problem.

Apart from simulator and mathematics courses there were no too popular answers. Stability/Loading and Engine side related courses were both brought up 3 times. Relating Stability/Loading there are 2 stability courses, 8 cargo handling courses and one combined ship types and cargo handling course so 11 courses around the subject in total.¹² It seems like it would be better to renew some parts of these courses rather than giving extra lessons.

6.4 Feedback about Net Services

Most of the students like the systems (27 commented the systems being good and 7 them being ok) but think that the many different systems make it all complicated (15 comments). According to the students, both the students and the teachers should receive better introduction to the systems to be able to get the most of them.

When it comes to specific systems (which are all presented on the figure 2), Itslearning is the most liked one (16 positive comments) although it also could be a bit clearer and maybe linked to Peppi. It has been used for about 3 years now and it has replaced Moodle, although Moodle is still used on a couple of the courses. Moodle didn't get any positive comments and 15 negative ones. A lot of students are wondering why we have Moodle when Itslearning is a lot better and is used for the same purpose (8 students commented on that). "I just don't

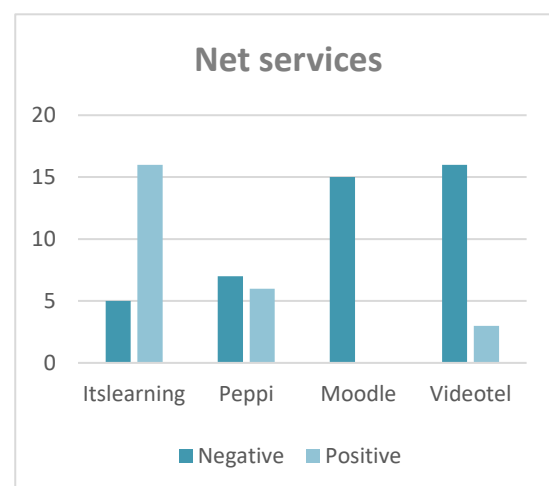


Figure 2. Negative and positive comments about the specific net services from the questionnaire (Appendix 1; 1.4).

understand why some teachers have to use Moodle since we have itslearning. It's confusing and those teachers have also difficulties to put the credits to Peppi", was an answer by a student. This links the problem to the general obliviousness of the systems and problems with certain teachers. Peppis score was quite even (6 positive comments and 7 negative comments). It replaced Winha and got positive feedback about that although it is a bit complicated and has other system problems sometimes. The change also dropped some of

¹² (NOVIA Study guide, 2019)

the credits off which has been problematic for students. Videotel got as much negative feedback as Itslearning got positive feedback. All the negative feedback against 3 positive comments arouses the question whether it should be used at all. It is a computer-based learning platform which problems regarding the students are that it is difficult to use with outdated material and is missing the web courses advantage: the possibility of usage anywhere. There has been a study about Videotel use in Aboa Mare before and the results of it are somewhat different. The study states that Videotel is a good tool if used on a bit different way.¹³ In general students seem to like the variation and possibilities the online courses give them. Of course, there are exemptions, but good online courses are generally liked.

6.5 Credits of Studies

With interpreting the table for answers of this question (1.5, Annex 1) one has to take into account the change from Winha to Peppi which occurred at the beginning of 2019. Due to the change some students lost some singular credits which might have an effect for a couple of answers. If the teachers have been reminded more than once the change cannot be the problem and with the change the question is not about one specific subject but random subjects.

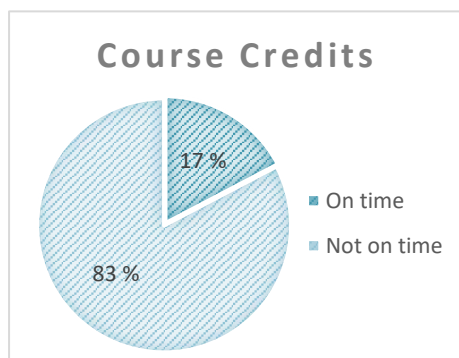


Figure 3. The number of students who answered that they have got their credits on time compared to the ones who have had some kind of problems. (Appendix 1, 1.5)

9 of the students who answered the questionnaire find that they have got their grades on time and in total 43 students have had problems with grades from at least some of the courses. The relation between these can be seen from figure 3. In the results and pie charts the answers of first-years are not taken into account because of the short time they have been studying Maritime Management.

According to Novias degree regulations “The coordinator of the study module or the course is responsible for the grades being entered into the study register not later than three weeks after the realization has ended.”¹⁴ However, in many cases it has taken several years for the students to get the grades. This causes many problems; e.g.

¹³ (Kallio, 2019)

¹⁴ (NOVIA Degree Regulations, 2019)

difficulties with following own studies and getting less money from KELA. KELA pays a financial aid for students regarding the progress with studies. A student needs to get at least 5 study points for each month of financial aid on average or the minimum of 20 credits in an academic year to get anything at all¹⁵, which means that the lack of credits can even lead to financial problems. Credits on web platforms also make it easy for students to follow the progress of studies. In case the credits are put years after the course has been completed it is very hard for one to keep on track of their own study-situation and the courses taken. From my own experience I can say that I have taken a course which of I wasn't sure whether I already had completed it a couple of years back or not and I'm not the only one who has had to do this. Also in case re-examination would be needed the students find out about it very late. All this could even lead to delay of graduation. All in all; the students have to face the consequences, which might be severe, of teachers neglect of Novias degree regulations about credits.

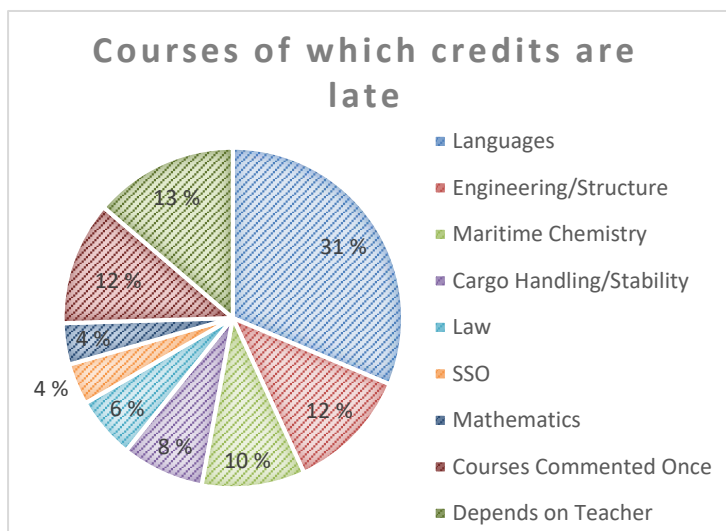


Figure 4. The courses students took up in the questionnaire under the question about with which courses the credits are late. The specifications can be found from appendix 1 (1.5).

Language courses hold the record regarding neglect of course grades (the relations between specific courses can be found on figure 4). It has mostly taken over a year and several reminders to get the grades for the 16 students who answered about the language courses under this question. None of the other problematic courses get even close to this. 6 of the students have had problems with

getting credits from engineering and structure courses. For most of them it has also taken over a year and at least one reminder to get them. After these two on the list are Maritime Chemistry (5 comments), Cargo Handling/Stability (4 comments), Law courses (3 comments) and 8 other courses with only 1 to 2 comments. In large majority of courses the students have had to remind the teachers in order to get the grades and in many cases several times.

¹⁵ (Kansaneläkelaitos, 2019)

Some of the missing credits could be explained with special features of seafaring. In the education of 4,5 years there are 360 sea days included (108 credits)¹⁶, which results in students being on board every now and then. The internet courses must therefore be problematic for teachers when trying to keep under control who has completed, which courses and when. Also problems with the systems (Peppi) could explain some of this but they cannot explain the missing grades in large numbers in specific subjects.

A counter measure has already been put into action: Peppi should give a reminder to the teacher if a student hasn't got the grade on time. This will hopefully help with the problem but there are still those problematic online courses.

6.6 Contacting Teachers

Most of the students who have started lately, on year 2019 or 2018, find it easy to contact the teachers (22 of the students who started year 2019 and 8 of those who started 2018). They wrote that all the teachers are nice, easily approachable and take the time for students plus that the contact information is easy to find. Then the numbers change. Most of the students who have started year 2017 or earlier have answered that the easiness of contacting depends on teacher or that it is not easy to contact them. In total 48 have commented it to be easy to contact the teachers, 11 it being not easy and 23 that it depends on teacher as can be seen in figure 5. The varying way of answering is interesting: as the ones who have answered “yes” commented on teacher’s approachability and nice

personality, the ones who answered “no” or gave negative feedback on some teachers commented rather the difficulty of finding the teachers or their slow/missing answers to e-mails. Two very similar comments from students who started year 2017 and one from a student who started year 2015 sum this all up very well. They wrote that it is made very easy to contact the teachers but on the other hand it is hard to get any results of it. Under “depends of teacher” (1.6 Appendix 1) there was also commented that some of the teachers are helpful and willing to give solutions and answer fast. I myself have been surprised of the fast answer

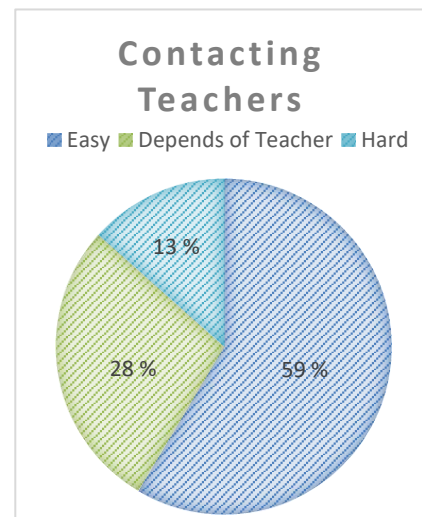


Figure 5. How the students who answered the questionnaire find contacting the teachers. (Appendix 1, 1.6)

¹⁶ (NOVIA Study guide, 2019)

even late in the evening. It has also been commented both under “Depends on teacher” and “No” that teachers mostly answer the phone. This might be a bit strange for students and they might not come up with calling the teachers.

All in all, it seems like during the first years the students mainly approach the teachers who they have classes with at that moment or teachers who are a lot at school and only have problems later on when they start to be on board some periods of time and need personal introductions of how to do a course online, the password on Itslearning etc. This also might result on a lot of mails to certain teachers and this being the reason for unanswered e-mails.

6.7 Possible Language Problems

The education for sea captain is divided to Swedish-speaking class and English-speaking class inside each study year. During the first study year the classes go mostly in their languages but later on both classes have most of the courses together which results in everything being in English. In the Swedish-speaking class everyone speaks English, naturally (it is tested when applying to the education), and in English speaking class Finnish people form the biggest nationality group. Because of the educational system in Finland, most of the Finns at least understand some Swedish. It means that most of the students understand both of the main languages used at school. In total 46 students answered that they haven’t had any problems with languages and 27 that they have had some kind of problems with them which is presented in figure 6.

The students who haven’t had any problems with languages usually answered that teachers speak understandable English even though it isn’t always too fluent. Many of those who commented that they haven’t encountered any problems regarding languages also said that it might be because they speak both Swedish and English and, in some cases, also Finnish.

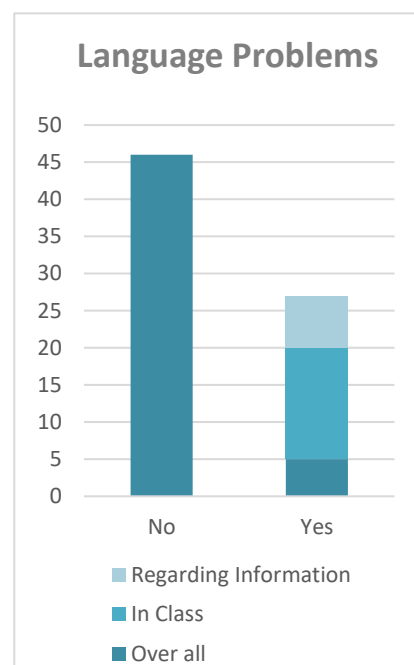


Figure 6. The students who have had problems with languages, divided to where they have encountered them, compared to those who haven’t had problems. (Appendix 1, 1.7)

15 of the students have had problems in class. Some of them stated that the material/parts of it has sometimes been in Swedish or Finnish in a course held in English. This is allowed by Novias Degree Regulations¹⁷ although it is questionable if some of the students don't understand it and need to google-translate it as was stated by a student in one of the answers. The English in some of the material, especially in some power points, is also commented to be in need of some spell check. This points to another commented problem: some teachers lacking English skills. Although most of the students find the English of teachers understandable, some of the students have a hard time understanding it. Also, some students find it unfair when some of the clarifying questions are asked in Swedish or Finnish by students. This cannot be affected easily but when the teachers answer in Finnish or Swedish a big part of the students miss the information in the teachers answer and which can be changed more easily.

There were 7 students who have had problems specifically regarding the information. They wrote that some information, particularly some e-mails and some announcements are only in Swedish or in some cases in Finnish. At least some of the e-mails could be explained by job offers the students get. They are quite often copied text from shipowners which is often in Swedish or Finnish and matches the language requirements of the post in question. Otherwise the information to all should be in English for everyone to understand but it didn't come up more in detail where the information has been in Swedish only. It is very difficult for one to notice if some information is in Swedish or Finnish if ones understanding of this language is good. Therefore, it is hard to fix any smaller part of information which is only in Swedish if no one points it out. For example, the clarifying words in the curriculum, such as a.m. and p.m., were solely in Swedish until it was noticed and changed from week 44 (2019). There were also some comments about Novias/Noviums information and mails which students find being for too big part in Swedish.

“However, teachers English limit the quality of teaching, unfortunately” was part of an answer of a student and there were many similar answers. This was mainly brought up with not having problems with languages (because teachers English is seen as understandable which is the most important thing) but the same thing was also taken up as a problem.

There are still a lot of small parts in other languages (the biggest problem being the e-mails) which would be good for students if they were changed to English. Of those who answered

¹⁷ (NOVIA Degree Regulations, 2019)

“Yes” to this question (5 students) the biggest part commented everything being mostly in English though.

6.8 Combining On Board Training and Work with the Curriculum

For graduation a student needs 360 so called sea days (108 study points)¹⁸ which is a lot. The first OBT (on board training) period is scheduled for the spring/summer of first year and thus the first-year students (2019) who have answered to this have not been taken into account. Although, if they have had valid comments about it, they have been counted with. 31 of the students stated that they have had no or very few problems with the subject and 28 students find these things hard to combine so the numbers are quite equal as can be seen in figure 7.

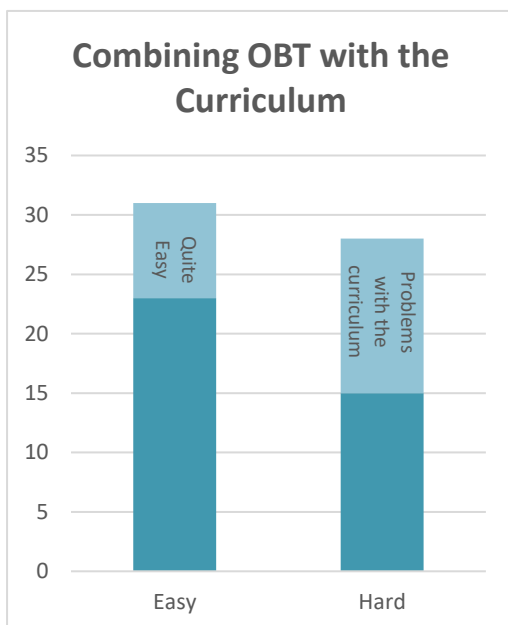


Figure 7. The number of students who have found it easy or quite easy compared to those who found it hard and number of the students who found it hard because of the curriculum. (Appendix 1, 1.8)

The students find that the early starting Christmas holiday and long summer holidays together with teachers' flexibility have a positive impact to combining on board time with the studies. Apprentice Mill, which is a site through which a student can apply for practice, is commented to be unpredictable but ok and attendance of online courses is wished to be easier.

13 of the students have had problems with the curriculum/timetable when trying to combine it with the OBT/work. Many of them commented that it is published too late to be able to plan a lot forward. Year 2019 the part of curriculum which starts from week 44 and ends to Christmas holiday was published two weeks before the first course on it started which is too late for students. It was also

wished that the obligatory lessons would be more concentrated in certain parts of the study year to allow longer gaps for the students to be able to do OBT during them. There are usually no places on vessels nor sense for the students to go for just a week but if the gap is two weeks its already possible. However, one of the students complained that its difficult to

¹⁸ (NOVIA Study guide, 2019)

sometimes have “Most of the month off but still for example 2 lessons a week so can’t do OBT”. The timetable is also wished to be simpler and more flexible.

15 students commented the combining to be difficult and the comments were varying. It was for example said there to be problems for the foreign students with the Finnish immigration. It was also hoped that there would be a list available of online courses. This list of online courses is discussed more later, under solutions.

7 Main Challenges

The smaller problems which came up in the analysis part above can be tracked down to form bigger concepts. In the end there are not too many of them, just some which affect a lot of things and make it difficult for both teachers and students.

7.1 The 360 Sea Days

In the maritime education in Novia there are in total 360 sea days included. The time reserved for the first 60 days is from the beginning of May until the end of August. The idea with this schedule is that the students get their Watchkeeping rating (deck) which is the first step on the maritime career. It also gives the students the possibility to apply for jobs and gain sea days (on board training days) while working. However, in Finland, apart from cruise ferries, the employers usually require the employees to have in addition a watchkeeping rating engine which the students need 60 seadays more for¹⁹. Those 60 days are nowadays counted in the 360 days for officer’s certificate and a lot of the students go for the Watchkeeping rating (engine) after the deck one bit by bit whenever they find the time to go on board. In the curriculum, the time scheduled for collection of the seadays is the third year but if a student wants to get paid of at least some of the on-board days and gain some working experience, it is not possible to get 300 days in a year with the 1:1 rotation usually used in Finland.

The system now used in Aboa Mare is to have intensive one to three weeks courses to make it easier for students to do the on board days when it suits them better. These short, intensive courses don’t tie the students to the school for a whole period but allow them to come and go and get OBT days while progressing in their studies. The system is great in my opinion (although as came up in the questionnaire, there are still some modifications needed) but it

¹⁹ (Traficom, Maritime certificates of competency, 2019)

also causes some trouble for teachers. The students want, and need, to do some courses or parts of courses online and this then again affects the teachers. Every student asks about the courses individually which creates a rush in certain teachers e-mail inbox. Surely this influences the response rate. It also gives its challenges for teachers to follow who has completed a course and when and therefore some grades might just be forgotten.

7.2 Information

The lack of information, providing it too late or it being in an unclear form, form a big part of the problems above.

7.2.1 Curriculum/timetable

It came up by many students that the timetable is published too late. There has been some progress with the release date of the curriculum just now though. The timetable for weeks 1-8 spring 2020 came out already week 48 of 2019. Before this, the timetable was usually published about two weeks before the first course on it started, sometimes more, sometimes less. The timetable should be available for students a lot earlier than 2 weeks beforehand, so let's hope this current change holds. Of course it is understandable that some changes may occur but it is important to have at least some kind of knowledge about the schedule sufficiently in advance to be able to plan anything. Most of the courses with mandatory presence are decided a lot in advance and those are the ones students want to know. The courses without mandatory presence changing place are not too problematic for students. As it came up in the interviews with the teachers, the very early publishing of timetable has been tried once before, years ago, with a note that changes may occur, resulting to complaints of the changes from students. Since the information on the timetable is a bit unclear, it can be that part of the problem has been that students haven't noticed it.

Regarding the curriculum, the problem is not only its late availability but also that it is unclear. First of all, the courses are colour coded. There are blue, red, black and green courses but unfortunately the explanations for these colour codes can't be found on the timetable either on Aboa Mares Novia-intranet or on the noticeboard where a physical timetable is always posted. To crack the code, you need to check the Curriculum Maritime Management further down on Aboa Mares Novia-intranet. The explanations for red, blue and black courses can be found online but the explanation for code green is missing.²⁰ There

²⁰ (NOVIA Curriculum Maritime Management, 2019)

S för bef "CCM "	sf14o307	T
(hållbar utv intro)		E
sfcg04		sf
+ MRM SF	SF14O119	sf
Enberg		P
+ MRM	mm14O119	St
Enberg		M
	mmcg04	
(Sustainable dev. Intro)		P
S for off "CCM " mm14o307		O
Förmiddag	Eftermiddag	F
A.M	P.M	A

Figure 8. The week 44 of the curriculum. The upper part is for YH and the lower one for MM. One row presents one weekday, but the division is not clear, and it can't be seen whether the courses continue after lunch and which days they are held. (ABOA MARE Timetable autumn 2019, week 35-51, 2019)

are also some weeks with a grey background which is explained on the time table (but it took quite a while for me to find it). There are some information lessons with yellow highlighting but that, together with green highlighting, is missing the explanation as well. In a couple of cases everything is made more confusing with grey being the colour of text for courses and there are also some courses which have a blue line going across the text. It can also be seen sometimes that a certain week is unclearly divided

and most of the students don't know which of the days they have and what. Week 44 of 2019 for YH2/3 and MM2/3 is a good example of this (figure 8).²¹

7.2.2 Courses

All the course information is wished to be available on Itslearning: the slide shows of the teachers, the additional material, the handouts, everything. It would make the information available and studying possible anywhere and keep the materials clearly organized and safe (plus its good for nature as well ;))

Some of the course materials need updating according to students. It has been mentioned under Parts of Studies that Need Renewing and Feedback about Net Services. Parts of information on some of the platforms is seen as outdated and needs checking. Students also wish for extra information on some matters.

²¹ (ABOA MARE Timetable autumn 2019, week 35-51, 2019)

7.3 Course Materials

Not only some of the information is in need of reviewing and updating but on some courses the material needs to be modernized. In many of the courses there are piles of papers dealt to each student. If a lot of information is on paper form only, it makes the studying inconvenient for students. The papers can be in one place only and they need to be carried wherever a student wants to study. It is also a lot easier to find information one is looking for if the study material is in, for example, PDF format.

The teachers are affected as well; they need to print out the material again before every course. In some cases there are folders containing the course information. Those folders are usually rotated so that they are always returned when the course ends (which also means the students can't return to it later on). In this case the information is harder to keep up to date. To renew the information of courses is easy when it is provided on a net platform. It also makes it possible to add links for further investigation of some subjects. Returning the assignments and controlling them is also simpler on internet not only for students but for teachers as well.

One option is to do it as it is done with GOC course. All the material is available on Itslearning in English, Swedish and Finnish plus provided in a folder to make it easy for students to follow the lectures on the easiest language for them and read the additional information at the same time the subject is covered and the students can make notes on the papers and keep the folders. This system takes into account all the different types of learners and language groups though it is not as ecological as internet sources alone.

Mathematics is a good example as well. The material for example for mathematics 1 is a book about the subject in PDF, a web page which has examples and explanations about each step including the answers and finally the previous year's exam with the answers. Only extra thing I can come up with which could even be added to the course would be step by step explanations of answers for the last years exams.

It would be good to make it to a rule that every course has a lot of material on Itslearning and this information should be widely spread to all the students. The information and assignment introductions need to be clear as well. Of course there are also courses where the idea is to look for information but it would probably lessen the frustration among the students if this is mentioned. And I'm not stating that the online courses on Itslearning would compensate for the actual lessons, they are needed and wished for.

7.4 Languages

As stated earlier (5.1.7 Possible Language Problems), there are a lot of students with different backgrounds and mother tongues studying in Aboa Mare. This affects the importance of everything being in English. To begin with the maritime education in Tuku has been solely in Swedish and is nowadays part of a Finnish-Swedish university of applied sciences, Novia, where English as the teaching language is an exemption. As came up in the questionnaire (Appendix 1), Novia should put more value on its English-speaking insiders. It seems like the university in question is nearly discriminating some of its students itself. Information can't be a privilege of Swedish-speaking students only.

Most of the information is in English already and it takes time for the administration to find out and translate the information in Swedish as noted earlier. E.g. some of the mails sent by Novia/Novium are still not in English according to students. Most of the e-mails have a note that the translation is after Swedish text which is good; everyone is then able to read the text on the language they find easiest. The job offers sent on other languages could have a note first of the mail being a job offer for e.g. Finnish-speakers only. This would reduce the frustration among the English-speaking students of not understanding yet another mail.

The majority of the students think teachers English is understandable. Still, providing better teaching to students is always good. The example about GOC course suits well to this case too: the course material is in English, Swedish and Finnish to give equal starting point to all. The material is also written in good language so it must have gone through a spell check etc. The teacher holding this course has not the best language skills, but he has done everything in his power to make it up for the students.

There was a mention about other students asking questions in their respective languages. This is also a challenge students and teachers face: it might be complicated to find the right words in difficult subjects to ask for an explanation and it is not fair for fellow students if they don't understand the teacher's clarification. However, some of the teachers have a solution for this. The students are encouraged by a couple of teachers to ask questions in English, Swedish or Finnish and they then translate the question to English with their extensive vocabulary of the subject and naturally give the answer in English as well.

The keys for improving the problems with languages is laid in the hands of teachers and administration. It is imperative to take the English-speaking students into account more. This

subject is not discussed under solutions since the teachers and administration being sharper when it comes to languages seems to be the only possibility and that is covered here already.

7.5 Practical Learning

This is not a problem but something students seem to value to a high extent. It can be seen a lot specially in the first half of the questionnaire. The courses which can directly be linked to the real work on board, such as simulator courses, are appreciated and wished to be more.

Many of the courses are wished to be more related to the real work of an officer or captain. It's brought up mostly with Cargo Handling/Stability and English. The student wishes for being able to take the polar code course also reflect this since in Finland during winter one does need to know how to handle with ice. The high demand of more simulator time is part of it as well. According to an earlier study the simulator time is very important in preparing the students for officer's work.²²

In many of the courses there is also too little time, or they are difficult and extra lessons are wished. It was brought up in the comments that homework specially with mathematics is wished for. However, this is not in accordance with current course setup regarding specially mathematics and physics where almost all the courses have a lot of material on Itslearning which was described under previous sub-heading. So, it is eventually up to the students if they want to study on their own and read explanations on how to solve the mysteries of mathematics. If they want to do homework they can or if they would need more time to learn the subjects, it would probably be a good idea to start preparing for the course already before the lectures start.

8 Suggestions for Solutions

It is not possible to have one solution to make the education better for students and to solve both the students and teachers' problems. Below you can find some solutions, which, of course, demand some effort from the teachers and administration. Mostly the question is about some effort in the beginning, which pays off later on with making everything simpler, easier and more coordinated.

²² (Oksanen, 2019)

This thesis is not about how to make the teachers more motivated to answer students e-mails or to put the credits to Peppi. I can only present solutions to make it easier for the teachers: how to reduce the e-mail rush and how to make it clearer with the deadlines and participants. The rest is left for teachers. Hopefully this results in shorter answering time/more answers and reduces the amount of forgotten credits.

The students' wishes for new courses are not discussed here since they are already analysed and commented earlier under 5.2 Suggestions for New Courses.

8.1 Availability of Information

The easy access to information and its clear presentation are the key factors in overcoming the challenges described above.

8.1.1 Timetable

As mentioned earlier, the timetable could use some minor updates. The publishing date was last time a good while before the first course on it started which is a change for better. Another very useful change would be to make a small table containing explanations for all the colour codes, backgrounds and highlighting's. It would be simplest to paste it on the side of the timetable, both to Aboa Mare intranet and to the noticeboard, so that it is easy to check them at the same time from the same place. So explanations of all the markings could be put to a table on the timetable. This table could also have the information about the possible changes to have everything in one place. As it also came out, and if it is possible, re-organizing the courses a bit to not have several gaps of less than a week there would be nice. Although, if the list of online courses described below or other similar solution is done, the students can easily fill the gaps with online courses.

8.1.2 List of Online Courses

This idea about a list suggested by a student in the questionnaire was great if implemented on a right way. The execution of this needs a bit of effort from the teachers to make all the information and introductions on Itslearning clear enough for every student to understand. The list should be found from the same place with the timetable: under the same heading or together with timetables for specific courses on Aboa Mares Novia-intranet. A note about where it can be found could be under the table for explanations on the timetable for everyone to find easily.

The list needs to be clear and state the courses in chronological order with clear division: first the ones which are supposed to be completed on support level, then those on operational level and last the management level courses. The list should also include the courses where its recommended to go to classes but not mandatory. With those courses the same colour coding as that on the timetable could be used with an explanation clearly next to it. It would be good for the courses to be available for all on Itslearning.

By clicking a course name there should open more specific information for the course: basic information, the requirements and Itslearning information. Basic information should include the responsible teacher and the course code and maybe also again if going to the lectures is recommended or not. The requirements part should contain the information about if the previous “level” has to be fully completed or if its ok to do the course with some missing courses. It should also state if some other specific courses need to be completed first. Itslearning information means the exact course name on Itslearning etc (the OBT itslearning information could be used as an example).

The deadlines for these independent courses could be twice a year: about a month before the date when the graduating students should have all the credits in to be able to graduate in December or May. These deadlines also simplify the teachers work.

This system would allow the students to do the courses whenever they have time for it without needing to be asking the teachers about the courses, presence and assignments all the time. This reduces the rush in teachers’ mailboxes and the mails will hopefully be answered more often and with smaller delays. The clear concept makes it also more organized for teachers which should help with the missing credits.

8.1.3 Link Bank

On Aboa Mares Novia-intranet there is already a lot of important information available. Information for new students, timetables, Course PMs (timetables for specific courses), re-examination information, all OBT information/links and curriculums can be found there.²³ This can be a good link/information bank, but it still could contain a bit more information.

The information is presented on a clear way with clear headings and only a couple of sub-headings which open up to present more specific information. Although, if more information

²³ (ABOA MARE Novia intanet, 2019)

is provided there, the sub-heading Autumn 2019 under Course PMs could open up to present all the specific courses and Supervised Onboard Training could have another sub-heading to hide the OBT office hours.

One very useful piece of information would be the links to all the web platforms: Itslearning, Peppi and Outlook together with the form of username and a note if the password is not the same as in everything else. A couple of these platforms are hard to find by googling and all the students are struggling all the time with loads of different forms of usernames used. Though the OBT Portal link already is under Supervised OBT, it could be put there as well with the link to Apprentice Mill whereas the link to Itslearning could then be removed from OBT information.

The list of online courses which was discussed in the previous chapter could be shown under timetables or as a second sub-heading under Course PMs.

There were a lot of students who wished for extra simulator hours. The students get e-mails every now and then when Aboa Mare is looking for volunteers to be on simulators in special occasions. Those dates and times together with more specific information about each occasion could be posted there together with information which Bo Lindroos has been saying to students (which a lot of students have missed, the problem with spoken information): if you want extra simulator hours just ask him. He can offer extra time in the simulators without instructor for e.g. manoeuvring after school when there is space for that.

A lot of students wished for extra lessons on e.g. languages. There is a possibility for it through Flexible Study Right (JOO-studies) which mean the students have the right to choose courses from other universities in Turku. This information could be provided on Aboa Mares intranet with links to JOOPAS services and “useful links to network universities” as Novia has on their intranet²⁴ excluding the links to universities in other cities. (The JOO-studies are discussed more under 6.2.1 Co-operation between Teachers, Professionals, Students and Schools.)

Novias web page is a mess, not only according to me, but also to many other students. Nothing about that was asked in the questionnaire but it was still brought up sometimes. The information is hard to dig up. Therefore, on Aboa Mares Novia intranet there could be a heading Thesis and under that the writing introductions and other important documents

²⁴ (NOVIA Flexible Study Right, 2019)

regarding the subject or links to Novias own web page where these documents can be found which would spare the trouble of updating the documents. It could also have same kind of introductions for its Itslearning course as OBT already has there. The timetable for seminars would also be useful together with the link to Theseus where all the theses which are online can be found.

The information for new students can be found from the intranet but it's missing the information for graduating students: the introductions on how to proceed together with due dates, the application and feedback which need to be filled. This could be one heading somewhere quite in the end of the web page.

The 2nd appendix contains a suggestion about how the Aboa Mare Novia-intranet could look like when changed.

8.2 Materials and Methods

If a student is motivated, it is a lot easier for him/her to learn. This is what the teachers should aim for when planning a course (of course with taking into account the frame decided for specific courses). It seems like the students want to be able to link all the information quite directly to seafaring and this could be the key used for motivation. Every student should, of course, be motivated to study the career they have chosen themselves, but it might be hard for the students to see the gain of some subjects. They are students and most of them have not been on board for too long; they haven't been working as officers or captains and don't exactly know how all the information provided could be beneficial for them in those positions. Linking the studies to the work would thus be a smart thing for the teachers to do to make the students realize the connection and find more motivation for certain courses.

This could be used in the maths courses, English courses and, in a bit modified way, on Cargo Handling/Stability courses. In some of mathematics courses most of the examples are related to seafaring but this could be implemented more widely. In English courses the MLE 1 & 2 were the ones brought up regarding the subject. Of those two the MLE 2 does correspond the course description²⁵ with being also clearly linked to seafaring so I assume the problem is MLE 1. The construction is a bit confusing on Itslearning and the contents of the course consist mainly of articles. Of these articles some are e.g. about leadership which is important on board a vessel. However, as a branch seafaring differs a lot from others and

²⁵ (NOVIA Curriculum Maritime Management, 2019)

thus the students would maybe find better motivation if the articles were e.g. about the leadership on a ship. And about the cargo handling one would think that it corresponds well with the real work. The main focus is on the stability calculations and of course with some particulars of the cargo but nowadays the stability software's are widely used. One of the programs is used in one of the courses. Familiarization to the system is done first to allow the students to use it independently with a loading assignment. After it they still need to go through and explain how they have loaded and why they have loaded the vessel on a way they did. The system was for a container ship and would be beneficial for other types of ships as well. There were wishes of specially NAPA as it is one of the usual systems. On the course for Ro-Ro vessels a stability software is not used, but one of the assignments is loading a vessel. This assignment in question is well designed and corresponds well to the reality. The stability software's being part of the cargo handling and stability courses has been covered more deeply in a thesis before, already year 2011.²⁶

When it comes to materials, the solutions are simple and mainly brought up earlier under 5.3 Course Materials and 6.1 Availability of Information. All the material should be available on Itslearning with clear structure and introductions. It should also be checked regularly and updated.

8.3 Co-operation between Teachers, Professionals, Students and Schools

Lately there has been feedback forms to fill from many courses. This brings up the students' opinions about the courses and the good, reasonable ideas are hopefully considered when teachers are planning the next course. Another question is whether a student finds motivation to fill the form after just completing all the assignments for the course. It is obligatory in some cases which is good on its way, but the students voice might still be lost in the process or the student might think that his/her voice doesn't matter and therefore not answer properly. The ones who have strong opinions most probably push through with this system anyway. One option for motivating the students to give feedback on the courses (as was suggested by a teacher in an interview) could be that the teacher of a course writes about the modifications he/she is going to make for that specific course for the next year. That way the students see the concrete effect of their feedback as came up in an interview with a teacher.

²⁶ (Oksanen, 2019)

With the co-operation between teachers and professionals I mean mainly the benefit the teachers could have by using the professionals during some of the normal lectures. Cargo handling would be a good example for this. E.g. a chief officer, who is in charge of the cargo operations at his/her work, from a container ship could be invited to have an hour/a couple of hours lecture with the students about how everything works in practice. It would give a good insight of cargo handling in special type of vessel to the students and keep the teacher well updated. This would also give some different points of views to each of the cargo handling courses and make everything easier for students to understand when the theory is linked to practice.

The co-operation between the different universities and universities of applied sciences already exist. The students have a Flexible Study Right which means that the students of Novia University of Applied Sciences can take some courses from other universities in Turku. The information about this is just not well provided. Many of the courses of other universities in Turku have most of the courses in Finnish or Swedish but some of them could be also held in English if requested. This would give the students a lot more variety: a possibility to study for example many other languages in Åbo Akademi²⁷ and stability, ship machinery, and ship design in Turku University of Applied Sciences²⁸. There is a slight problem with combining the timetables and different campuses kilometres away from each other, but with motivation it is doable. From own experience I can say that as the teachers from our school are flexible when they can, the teachers from other schools can also be flexible if a student has a good reason to miss some classes. And what would be a better reason to skip a class than a mandatory, profession related course? The challenges this puts for the attendance must of course be discussed with the teacher beforehand. As stated earlier, this information could be provided on Aboa Mares intranet with links to JOOPAS service and the links/introductions on how to find the available courses from other universities.

9 Synopsis

It was studied from students' perspective which parts of maritime education in Novia University of Applied Sciences are in need of development and the results of a questionnaire aimed for students were used as a basis in forming ideas for solutions. The questionnaire was dealt using peer to peer method and a big amount of answers was obtained. The answers

²⁷ (Åbo Akademi Studiehandbok, 2019)

²⁸ (Turku AMK Study Guide, 2019)

were put on tables and analysed after which several interviews with teachers and personnel of Aboa Mare were conducted to form a comprehensive picture of the subjects covered and to pinpoint the challenges and come up with the best realistic solution suggestions.

The results can be put together as follows: if all the information is clearly and easily available and simple comprehensive systems are used, it gives the students all the tools to proceed in their studies. The subjects and tasks need to be presented in a way that make students understand how it is linked to seafaring to motivate them. The possibilities for digging deeper into the subjects must be given and the information about them spread. After this the question is whether the students take the possibilities given or if they turn their backs to the learning opportunities.

10 Criticism

The methods used were good for the purpose of this thesis. The interviews with the teachers helped to comprehend the other side of the story and build a good overview. The consultation of them about the challenges and solution ideas helped to make the details of the solutions realistic. The questionnaire then again should have asked a bit more background information: the languages the student understands and the days on board would have helped a lot when analysing the results. Handing it out to students in paper form while explaining the importance of it was the right choice. It gave a lot of answers and all kinds of opinions. A risk with online questionnaires is that only people with similar opinions bother answering it.

People tend to complain easily and tell more about recent experiences. Therefore, all the answers of any questionnaire are approximate. Mostly the answers are fact based but the relations could not be too accurate. E.g. I was handing out the questionnaire during two mathematics courses which naturally make the students complain about maths more. About complaining: it is easy to complain even if someone doesn't know a subject too well or has himself missed some information. Also, the problems with credits and answers from teachers are real and make the students to fire up (this is experiential information). This might cause some of the students to just start complaining about anything. I still think the results are quite accurate given the amount of answers. As stated earlier, the numbers might be affected by before named reasons, but the subjects students have named often can't be plucked out of the air.

The next thing would be to see the results of this in a couple of years. It could be analysed whether the suggestions for solutions are put into action as they are described in this thesis or in a similar way, and how it has affected the problems described. It could have resulted on different problems or some of the problems might not have had the effect presented in this thesis. Thus, another study after a while would be good to analyse if there has been a change, what has resulted in this and if it is easier for students after the change.

This thesis covers a wide topic and details of certain courses are not brought up or analysed if they are not brought up by students in the questionnaire. It would be good to make studies for developing certain parts of maritime education by digging deep in to those parts. Those studies could concentrate on a couple of courses from same topic to make the courses better from students point of view bit by bit.

11 References

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Appendix 1

1 Tables of the Questionnaire Results

85 questionnaires in total were filled which of 27 of first year students, 11 of second year students, 15 of third year students, 9 of fourth year students, 16 of fifth year students or older and 7 of those without a starting year or those who have studied in Axxell before and can't be put to the same scale. The answers with undefined year are shown in the tables as +X in "Total" column. On the left you can see the wider subject, then the number of answers for the specific year plus total and on the right are the comments for the subjects. A couple of the answers are moved under a more suitable question. Under some questions the answers for first year students are in parenthesis and not calculated with in "Total" column since they cannot have a good understanding about the subject. The questionnaire was done mainly in October which means that they had been in school for a short time period only and have only done a couple of courses and haven't had any on board training yet. In the analysis of the answers the singular comments are rarely taken in the account unless they form another, different whole and thus can only be seen on these tables.

1.1 Are there parts of studies that should be renewed?

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Comments
Courses and material in general	2	1	1	1	5	10+1	Needs updating Digitalizing; no blurry scans All the material, including the material which is went through in class, should be available on itslearning Videotel/itslearning: some material standards Too many of the courses are not related to seafaring Less online courses One should be able to do more courses by examination only
Mathematics/Physics	2	1			5	8+1	Homework and going them through in class

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							Not only examples It goes forward too fast
Cargo Handling/ Stability			6			6+1	Not only calculations More detailed info More about “real” work procedures Material updated regularly New teaching methods should be tested Maybe rotating teachers to get different aspects Info about loading/stability software (NAPA etc)
English	1		1	1	1	4	Too many courses MLE n” didn’t have any content” Focus on seafaring
Simulator courses				1	2	3	Max 2 on bridge More introduction to different systems More time for simulators and manoeuvring
Celestial navigation			1		2	3	
Chemistry		1		1		2	Methods (not everything online etc)
Terr. nav. B						+2	
Environmental Protection			1			1	More specific information
IT-studies		1				1	Methods (not everything online etc)
Machinery				1		1	More practical; what happens in the machinery space when something is changed on the bridge
Ship theory		1				1	Not enough time
Watchkeeping duties engine		1				1	Not enough time
Meteorology		1				1	

Metal works		1				1	Not enough time
Guidance counselling	1					1	A possibility to reserve a time (study planning with a teacher etc)
Yes		1				1	
No	6	4	1	4	3	18+2	

1.2 Do you have any suggestions of new courses you would like to have the possibility to choose in addition to the obligatory ones?

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Notes
Polar code	2	1	4	3	1	11	Or some compact version of it since we need the information of icy conditions Advanced also
Languages	5	1	1			7+1	Spanish, German
FRB			3			3+2	
DP			4			4	
More of machinery		1	1		2	4	Certification for usage of machinery/devices Crane operator
Different opportunities at sea	2			1		3	For example coast guard telling about their work, people from different kind of vessels telling about theirs etc
Paperwork		1			1	2	Course to learn the paperwork which you have to deal with as an officer/captain
STCW renewals		2				2	
Sea survival and personal rescue					2	2	Not only STCW minimum
Variation & freedom to choose some in general	1				1	2	
Practical courses		1		1	1	2	Knots, splicing etc
AB			1			1	
Autonomous shipping		1				1	Introduction and possibilities

IMDG				1		1	
Napa course						+1	
Skipper course			1			+1	Skipper in domestic service?
Obt+cargo handling		1				1	Integrated, practical course
Leadership	1					1	Etc relating authority structure on board
Primary diving course						+1	

1.3 Are there any courses you would like to have some extra lessons with?

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Notes
Simulator	4		3	3	4	14+3	Specially manoeuvring Introduction to bridge gear Simulators should be used in more of the courses to try things in practice
Mathematics	9	4		1		14+1	Homework would be good
Stability/Loading		1	1	1		3	
Engine side		1				1+2	E.g. watchkeeping duties engine
ECDIS			2			2	
Col Regs	1	1				2	
Metal works		1		1		2	
Physics	1	1				2	
More face to face					2	2	Courses seem to run with minimum hours, (assignments compensate some of it)
Finnish/Swedish	1			1		2	
Navigational aids		1				1	
Profession related	1					1	
Terr. Nav		1				1	
Ship theory		1				1	
First aid	1					1	More physical trauma training

No	4	2	1	1	1	9+1	
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1.4 What kind of experiences you have from the net services? (Itslearning, Peppi, Videotel, Moodle)

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Comments
Good	10	5	4	1	3	23+4	Easy to manage/control everything Gives a possibility to study on board Tuudo app. very useful; should include all courses Easy to use Would need a bit better introduction
Too many systems	8	2	1	2	2	15+1	Complicated and confusing Too many passwords/usernames There should be one page to access all the services Usage of systems standardized
Ok	3	1			3	7	Would need a bit better introduction
Not good	1		1			2	Teachers don't know how to use the services properly Teachers don't reply on them Login & update problems
Peppi Positive		1		2	3	6	Better than Winha
Peppi Negative	1	2	1	1	1	6+1	Sometimes slow Service breaks Difficult to use/complicated Should be linked to itslearning Dropped some of the credits off
Moodle positive						0	
Moodle Negative	1		4	5	4	14+1	Unnecessary (we already have itslearning) Outdated Slow Old courses confuse
Itslearning Positive	1	1	1	4	7	14+2	Works well Should always be used instead of Moodle
Itslearning Negative	2	1			1	4+1	Complicated/unclear Old courses confuse Should be linked to Peppi
Videotel Positive	2		1			3	
Videotel Negative	5	1	2	3	4	15+1	Material is outdated Works only in school Is used too much Sometimes you can't hear anything on videos A bit difficult to use

							Too many links to follow-> confusing
Face to face teaching preferred					2	2	

1.5 Do you think that you have not got your grades on time? (official time is 3 weeks after set deadline/when the course ends) And which courses have been problematic?

If you answered yes:

- About how long did it take for you to get those grades?
- Did you have to remind the teacher to get some grades?

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Notes
Yes	(1)	2	1	2	5	10+5	Weeks/months, had to remind From months to years, reminded usually multiple times 4-5 months, had to remind Hard to know if re-examination is needed "more of a rule than an exemption"
No	(7)	6		1	1	8+1	
Language courses		1	9	3	3	16	A year, had to remind 1-2 years, monthly reminding Over a year, had to remind (by asking daily, sending emails, leaving notes...) 2+ years, had to remind x4 several times, didn't help Never got them, although reminded (2017) <u>English:</u> 1-12 months, had to remind <u>Swedish:</u> 1-12 months, had to remind 1,5 years 2 years, had to remind, didn't help <u>Finnish:</u> Had to remind
Depends on teacher		1	3		2	6+1	Takes from months to years Some teachers need to be reminded several times 1-12 months, had to remind 1,5 years, reminded several times Over a year, had to remind (by asking daily, sending emails, leaving notes...)
Engineering and structure courses		1	4		1	6	Over a year, had to remind (by asking daily, sending emails, leaving notes...) 1,5 years, reminded several times <u>Mechanical engineering:</u> had to remind <u>Ship theory:</u>

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							5-6 weeks, had to remind 1,5 years, had to remind 2+ years, have reminded
Maritime chemistry			4	1		5	A year, had to remind 9 months, reminded several times 2+ years, had to remind (no reply)
Cargo handling/stability				1	3	4	months, had to remind 2+ years, had to remind
Law			1	2		3	Months, had to remind <u>Law 2:</u> 6 months, had to remind, didn't help
SSO					2	2	
Mathematics			1	1		2	1-12months, had to remind
Ship maintenance			1			1	2+ years, have reminded
Occupational safety			1			1	2+ years, have reminded
Meteorology 1			1			1	3 months, had to remind
Elective studies			1			1	9 months, reminded several times
Manoeuvring 2			1			1	1,5 years, had to remind several times
A course from "wrong" study year					1	1	Never got it, had to do the course again

1.6 Do you find it easy to contact the teachers?

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Notes
Yes	22	8	5	4	7	46+2	Contact information easy to find They mostly have time for you They are all nice Usually answer the messages Sometimes the response is slow Its easy to contact them but hard to get them to do something
Depends on teacher	3	3	8	5	3	22+1	A couple/most don't answer e-mails Some answer fast Some are hard to find at school They usually answer phone Some helpful and willing to give solutions
No	1	1	1		6	9+2	They don't answer emails Finding them in person hard & impractical Phone calls usually work

1.7 Have you had problems with languages?

For example is some information in Swedish although it is for all, have you had problems following a course because of teachers language skills.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Notes
No	18	8	4	3	9	44+2	Teachers English is understandable Teachers English is not too fluent
Yes, In Class	1	2	3	3	4	13+2	Some teachers have lacking English skills (also spell-check in powerpoints would be good) Some materials have parts in Finnish/Swedish (meteorology material completely in Swedish) In some courses which should be in English questions are asked and answered in Swedish
Yes, regarding information	3		1	2		6+1	Some information is only in Swedish Some mails are sent in Swedish or Finnish only Announcements are in Swedish Noviums/Novias e-mails should all be in English Web- page should be better
Yes	2		2	1		5	"More English, less Swedish, please" Mostly everything is in English

1.8 Do you find it easy to combine and plan your onboard training/work with the curriculum?

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015->	Total	Comments
Yes		6	7	5	3	20+3	Teachers help in this Good to have long Christmas holiday and start summer holiday early Mylly is unpredictable but ok
Quite easy	1		3	1	3	8	Attending online courses when on board should be easier Difficult to combine a non-sea work with obt and studies

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No, problems with curriculum	3	1	4	2	3	13	<p>Should be published earlier e.g. 1 week like last spring not enough</p> <p>More flexibility/Most of the courses are once a year</p> <p>Difficulties reading it</p> <p>Gaps in it (Most of the month off but still for example 2 lessons a week so can't do obt)</p> <p>Too many red courses during the last study year when most of the students already have a job</p>
No		2		1	7	13+2	<p>There could be a list of online courses</p> <p>Problems with Finnish immigration</p>

Appendix

Link and Information Bank

The current form of Aboa Mares Novia-intranet was copied, and the changes described under segment 6.1.3 Link Bank are implemented to it. The changes and additions are marked with *.

Novia Intranet

Information for new Novia students

Orientation week 35, 2019 (schedule for new MMC students)

Important links*

Itslearning

Username: e-mail address Password: Different from others

Peppi

Username: NameSurname Password: Same as to school computers

Outlook

Username: NameSurname@edu.novia.fi Password: Same as to school computers

Apprentice Mill

OBT Portal

Timetables

[Timetable autumn 2019, week 33-42](#)

[Timetable autumn 2019, week 35-51](#)

[Timetable spring 2020, week 1-8](#)

Course PMs

[List of online courses*](#)

[Autumn 2019*](#)

Extra Simulator Possibilities*

Aboa Mare needs volunteers to man some of the bridges on special occasions. You can find the dates for them behind the link and volunteer by sending a mail to annina.rosenqvist@novia.fi

[Volunteer dates](#)

If the dates don't suit your schedule, you can ask Bo Lindroos if there are some other possibilities.

JOO-studies*

Students of Aboa Mare have the right to choose courses from other universities and universities of applied sciences.

[Introduction](#)

[JOOPAS](#)

Apply for flexible study right, enrol to courses and search for credits

Re-examination 2019-2020

Please note that you must register for the re-exams via the Moodle platform!

[Re-examination Moodle 2019-2020](#)

Supervised onboard training*

After you have received an onboard training placement you should contact the vessel, update the OBT Portal with your upcoming approximate seadays and take care of the OBT Contract. There are several other things you need to be aware of before your OBT starts. The instructions and OBT Contract can be found on Itslearning, please read the instructions.

[Log in to OBT Portal here](#)

[How to find the "Onboard training - Novia" Itslearning course](#)

Onboard Training Office Hours*

E-mail address for onboard training questions: onboardtraining@aboamare.fi

Thesis*

[Writing introductions](#)

[Template](#)

[Thesis seminar dates](#)

[How to find the "Thesis" Itslearning course](#)

[Theseus](#)

Graduation*

[How to proceed](#)

[Application for Degree Certificate](#)

[AVOP feedback](#)

Curriculums

[Curriculum Maritime Management, Captain](#)

[Läroplan, Sjökapten](#)